

that question; he referred to Blackstone, who, in his "Commentaries," said, "The session is never understood to be a"

and until a prerogative; though, unless some Act be passed, or some judgment given in Parliament, it is in truth a session at all." Again, Coke stated in his "Institutes," "When a Parliament is called, and doth sit, and is dissolved without any Act of Parliament passed, or judgment given, it is no session of Parliament, but a convention." Dewarrie, too, a very high authority, stated in his work "On the construction of Statutes."

by a Parliament that "had met and sat," Mr. Haskins says, they understood a Parliament of which a meeting had been held. i. e., where a bill had passed both Houses and received the royal assent. For, when the Parliament meets and passes a bill, it is combined and becomes one body; and no judgment given, it is styled a convocation or session;" so declared by King James I. in his "commission for settling the religion of England, 1611. An Assembly when Queen Elizabeth was thought to be dying, and she said, "I am glad that as decreed former parliaments should meet immediately upon her election to pass a bill." [1] "Pro quo nulla regalia agantur nisi per personam ipsius Regis, et parliamentum, seu aliquod conventus suorum magnificorum, nobilium, clericorum, militum, &c. non sit deinde interdictum quod illud parliamentum, seu conventus, non possit iterum congregari ad deliberandum super illis articulis, si fuerint ibidem presentes, vel si aliter fuerint convocati." On this declaration of the King, and the opinion of Sir Johnelden whether the judgement given against him (Lord Bacon) in this convention could be valid. The sound advice given Bacon has been ever since a rule of law.

He would quote one other authority: it was that of crime, who, in his Law Dictionary, under the heading

by a Parliament that "had met and sat," Mr. Haskins says, they understood a Parliament of which a meeting had been held. i. e., where a bill had passed both Houses and received the royal assent. For, when the Parliament meets and passes a bill, it is not combined with a meeting of the Houses, and no judgment gives, it is then styled a convocation, "which" is so declared by King James I. in his "commission for settling the religion of the 1611. Assembly when Queen Elizabeth was thought to be dying." "The Parliament," it is so declared printed in 1661 cannot be met immediately on a dissolution to pass a bill. "1. Pro quo nulla regalia assensu personarum per se, sed assensu Parliamenti, seu aliquo alio, non habentur." "2. Pro quo nulla regalia assensu personarum per se, sed assensu Parliamenti, seu aliquo alio, non habentur." On this declaration of the King, and the words of Sirelden whether the judgment gives against him (Lord Bacon) this convention could be valid. The sound advice given Hume has been to be sure, but it is not a burning question. He would quote one other authority: it was that of crime, who, in his Law Dictionary, under the heading

Parliament," said—

A prerogative of Parliament is always by the King; and in his case the session must begin de novo. An adjournment is by the House of Commons, and is understood as a prorogation and adjournment. 1 Met. 262. By a prerogative of the King there is a session; and every several session of Parliament is in a several Parliament; though if it is only an adjournment, it is in the same Parliament when a continuation is ordered, but, if dissolved without any Act passed or judgment rendered, and a new session of Parliament, but a convention. 1 Inst. 27. If an adjournment is dissolved, and orders made, and writs of error issued, it is the House that is dissolved, and orders must be signed, this is but a convention, and no Parliament is dissolved; but every session in which the King signs a Bill, is a Parliament, and so every Parliament is a session. 2 Rep. 202. But—

We thought that after considering these very clear and distinct authorities, those hon. members who might have been

inclined to suppose that there was no difficulty at all about the matter, would see that it was surrounded with many difficulties, and that the construction of the Constitution in favour of the members concerned. We ought not to proceed to construe the Act strictly as we should in a criminal case, where the rights of the accused are at stake. These members of the right to a seat in this House, in the case of a case that occurred under a similar clause in the Constitution Act of Queensland, where two members were absent from the House, who were not present at the time of the matter of emergency, and those members not having been present, could not attend. It was argued by the Judge sitting there, that the Acts passed in the absence of those members were not valid, and that the House was not a Law Officers of England, and it would be seen that the construction they gave to the Act was based upon a very liberal reading of the words contained in this statute.

the decision. He would quote from the decision of the Law Officers of England, upon that matter being submitted to them:—

"In our opinion the seats of the two members Messrs. Hamilton and Fleming did not become absolutely vacant in consequence of their non-attendance at the extraordinary session of the House of Commons, and the seats of the two members Messrs. St. John and St. John would not become vacant either at that session or at any subsequent session, although it appears to us that the short session held at that time was not a session of the House of Commons within the meaning of the Colonial Act, ratified and confirmed by the Statute 18th and 19th Victoria, c. 24, yet we are of the opinion that the non-attendance of the two members Messrs. Hamilton and Fleming at the extraordinary session of the House of Commons, although not a personal breach or default, did not amount, upon a sensible construction of the enactment, to a failure to give effect to the Act. No such personal default is alleged, and it seems to be probable."

He had quoted this, not as a case immediately in point, but as showing that the House of Commons had referred the authorities in England upon cases of the kind to the Law Officers in England; and upon cases of the kind the Law Officers referred to the privileges of the select committee would

There were no members of the House who had been elected before the war, and therefore, these members were not absent from their places in the House when anything actually was done or performed during the session. The members of the House ought to look at what was the intention of the framers of the Act, and at the particular terms that were to be found in the Constitution Act; and it unquestionably was, to prevent inconvenience to the colonies, that the members of the colony, if they could not be sent that the absence of those gentlemen during a session when nothing was done, constituted a failure to attend "in the morning of that session." We might as well say that the members of the House were liable to become vacant, if it was decided against them. That was another reason that appeared to him to render it necessary that this question should be referred to the Legislative Council, and he trusted the decision of the Legislative Council was not final or conclusive.

haved; it would be subject to an appeal to the Privy Council; and could there be a single doubt but that in such a case the Privy Council would be guided by the precedents that he had quoted? It must be remembered that the Constitution Act was part of an Act of Parliament, and he had no doubt that, in the construction of the Act, the Privy Council would be guided by the word *session* would be construed as it was employed in the Act of the Imperial Parliament, having reference to the Act itself and not to the colonial Legislature. This appeared to be the only proper interpretation of the word, and certainly to be borne in mind when hon. members came to a decision on the point at issue, — that they should be guided not by any fanciful construction of the word *session*, but by the construction that the Privy Council would place upon the word, according to the manner in which it would be ultimately decided by the Privy Council of England. He would not say that he implied that the Privy Council would be guided by such precedents as he had mentioned, but he implied that they would be guided by the precedents that he had quoted.

members could not possibly be here this session, and their seats would become vacant in another way, so that there would be no appeal to the Privy Council. But it was not necessary to go into details, and he suggested that he was establishing a precedent which might be of the greatest possible importance, and he was most anxious that the discussions of the Council should be strictly confidential. He particularly said this was the first time that the Legislative Council had been called upon to act in a judicial capacity. With these remarks, he would leave the matter to the Council.

Sir W. MANNING seconded the motion.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL said that, as he differed from the conclusions arrived at by the hon. gentleman who had just spoken, he would not venture to offer his own possession of his views on the question. His members would see that the matter was one of extreme importance, as affecting the constitution of the Council, and he thought that it would be

trivilege, and on account of it having been sent down to law by its Excellency in a formal manner. He thought he should be able to convince his members of the propriety of the report of the select committee. This was the substance of the speech which was delivered with cursory allusions to such authorities as had just been cited, but it was a question of such larger bearings. As to the second, he was allied with the majority of the House, but had nothing whatever to do with the construction of the word "session," as in the case an Act of Parliament was passed, and there was no reason to suppose that on the part of the House of Commons there was any intention to alter the meaning of the word "session," as it occurred in the Constitution Act, whether there was no reason when an Act was passed. He would first of all try to dispose of the army of authority which was arrayed against the Attorney General. He would first of all quote the words of Coke, and when lawyers looked at authorities they always looked to the authors quoted from.

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and to contemplate colonial Legations, which not only did not exist, but which were not even in the mind of the Government. It would be hard to have entered into the mind of Blackstone, in 1760, that the law he laid down would be applied to colonial Legations. It could never have entered his mind that the Government would be so stupid as to do this. Parliament could do so much for us as the colony was concerned, but not "the Parlement" to which these *decrees* referred. It would be to authorize what had been done, referring to it as a law. Parliament had no hearing whatever on this question. In the legal and constitutional application of terms, those authorities were not applied to the Parliament of this country. The Government had applied to the Parliament of this country, and the Privy Council, and have been told that the authority of the Privy Council, not very long ago, was decidedly in favour of the Privy Council of France. The resolution was made under the

authority of the Speaker, and the matter was brought before the Privy Council and it was determined; that the *lex et consuetudo Parliamenti* did not belong to the Assembly of Tennessee, so with other bodies similarly constituted. He would quote Baron Pollock on this occasion [judgment read.] This, he thought, should not only be a leading, but

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A point of order, as to the manner in which the members at all interests were to be present. The President right or interest in the matter. Mr. Mackay supported the order in opposition to the debate. The Senator, under the motion, withdrew by 8, the introduction great difficulty, the case being on the Trade Bill without amendment. The report of the Agriculture Bill was made. The Australian trade a second time. The House adjourned.

Is the Legislature in a position to give information by floods to the Bay River, are the members across the Bench of Mr. Mackay had been referred their opinion as to the matter; that ago for the case at Tabulari; but until the road has been made, the information would be given to the Legislature. Mr. Mackay moved the purpose of the subject. Mr. Mackay's terms of his first motion, the shipping, 1st May, the provisions. Petitions were the Maidland Bay by Mr. Campbell, praying for extension from the operation and by Mr. Davies relief in respect of the Crown. Mr. Davies, in committee on the and the committee moved the second motion of the Day for the following motion—by Mr. Davies, in committee on the subject of Mr. Mackay, the 22nd March. The Impoundment passed through the House. Mr. Mackay also moved the purpose of the bill charges on the bill had been changed. The provisions of Mr. PARKES, the practice of the complaints of the members, the new action was pending motion for adjournment. The House then considered the bill for the year 1864. The following bill was introduced: 4131 15s. 3d. 4132 15s. 3d. 4133 15s. 3d. 4134 15s. 3d. 4135 15s. 3d. 4136 15s. 3d. 4137 15s. 3d. 4138 15s. 3d. 4139 15s. 3d. 4140 15s. 3d. 4141 15s. 3d. 4142 15s. 3d. 4143 15s. 3d. 4144 15s. 3d. 4145 15s. 3d. 4146 15s. 3d. 4147 15s. 3d. 4148 15s. 3d. 4149 15s. 3d. 4150 15s. 3d. 4151 15s. 3d. 4152 15s. 3d. 4153 15s. 3d. 4154 15s. 3d. 4155 15s. 3d. 4156 15s. 3d. 4157 15s. 3d. 4158 15s. 3d. 4159 15s. 3d. 4160 15s. 3d. 4161 15s. 3d. 4162 15s. 3d. 4163 15s. 3d. 4164 15s. 3d. 4165 15s. 3d. 4166 15s. 3d. 4167 15s. 3d. 4168 15s. 3d. 4169 15s. 3d. 4170 15s. 3d. 4171 15s. 3d. 4172 15s. 3d. 4173 15s. 3d. 4174 15s. 3d. 4175 15s. 3d. 4176 15s. 3d. 4177 15s. 3d. 4178 15s. 3d. 4179 15s. 3d. 4180 15s. 3d. 4181 15s. 3d. 4182 15s. 3d. 4183 15s. 3d. 4184 15s. 3d. 4185 15s. 3d. 4186 15s. 3d. 4187 15s. 3d. 4188 15s. 3d. 4189 15s. 3d. 4190 15s. 3d. 4191 15s. 3d. 4192 15s. 3d. 4193 15s. 3d. 4194 15s. 3d. 4195 15s. 3d. 4196 15s. 3d. 4197 15s. 3d. 4198 15s. 3d. 4199 15s. 3d. 4200 15s. 3d. 4201 15s. 3d. 4202 15s. 3d. 4203 15s. 3d. 4204 15s. 3d. 4205 15s. 3d. 4206 15s. 3d. 4207 15s. 3d. 4208 15s. 3d. 4209 15s. 3d. 4210 15s. 3d. 4211 15s. 3d. 4212 15s. 3d. 4213 15s. 3d. 4214 15s. 3d. 4215 15s. 3d. 4216 15s. 3d. 4217 15s. 3d. 4218 15s. 3d. 4219 15s. 3d. 4220 15s. 3d. 4221 15s. 3d. 4222 15s. 3d. 4223 15s. 3d. 4224 15s. 3d. 4225 15s. 3d. 4226 15s. 3d. 4227 15s. 3d. 4228 15s. 3d. 4229 15s. 3d. 4230 15s. 3d. 4231 15s. 3d. 4232 15s. 3d. 4233 15s. 3d. 4234 15s. 3d. 4235 15s. 3d. 4236 15s. 3d. 4237 15s. 3d. 4238 15s. 3d. 4239 15s. 3d. 4240 15s. 3d. 4241 15s. 3d. 4242 15s. 3d. 4243 15s. 3d. 4244 15s. 3d. 4245 15s. 3d. 4246 15s. 3d. 4247 15s. 3d. 4248 15s. 3d. 4249 15s. 3d. 4250 15s. 3d. 4251 15s. 3d. 4252 15s. 3d. 4253 15s. 3d. 4254 15s. 3d. 4255 15s. 3d. 4256 15s. 3d. 4257 15s. 3d. 4258 15s. 3d. 4259 15s. 3d. 4260 15s. 3d. 4261 15s. 3d. 4262 15s. 3d. 4263 15s. 3d. 4264 15s. 3d. 4265 15s. 3d. 4266 15s. 3d. 4267 15s. 3d. 4268 15s. 3d. 4269 15s. 3d. 4270 15s. 3d. 4271 15s. 3d. 4272 15s. 3d. 4273 15s. 3d. 4274 15s. 3d. 4275 15s. 3d. 4276 15s. 3d. 4277 15s. 3d. 4278 15s. 3d. 4279 15s. 3d. 4280 15s. 3d. 4281 15s. 3d. 4282 15s. 3d. 4283 15s. 3d. 4284 15s. 3d. 4285 15s. 3d. 4286 15s. 3d. 4287 15s. 3d. 4288 15s. 3d. 4289 15s. 3d. 4290 15s. 3d. 4291 15s. 3d. 4292 15s. 3d. 4293 15s. 3d. 4294 15s. 3d. 4295 15s. 3d. 4296 15s. 3d. 4297 15s. 3d. 4298 15s. 3d. 4299 15s. 3d. 4300 15s. 3d. 4301 15s. 3d. 4302 15s. 3d. 4303 15s. 3d. 4304 15s. 3d. 4305 15s. 3d. 4306 15s. 3d. 4307 15s. 3d. 4308 15s. 3d. 4309 15s. 3d. 4310 15s. 3d. 4311 15s. 3d. 4312 15s. 3d. 4313 15s. 3d. 4314 15s. 3d. 4315 15s. 3d. 4316 15s. 3d. 4317 15s. 3d. 4318 15s. 3d. 4319 15s. 3d. 4320 15s. 3d. 4321 15s. 3d. 4322 15s. 3d. 4323 15s. 3d. 4324 15s. 3d. 4325 15s. 3d. 4326 15s. 3d. 4327 15s. 3d. 4328 15s. 3d. 4329 15s. 3d. 4330 15s. 3d. 4331 15s. 3d. 4332 15s. 3d. 4333 15s. 3d. 4334 15s. 3d. 4335 15s. 3d. 4336 15s. 3d. 4337 15s. 3d. 4338 15s. 3d. 4339 15s. 3d. 4340 15s. 3d. 4341 15s. 3d. 4342 15s. 3d. 4343 15s. 3d. 4344 15s. 3d. 4345 15s. 3d. 4346 15s. 3d. 4347 15s. 3d. 4348 15s. 3d. 4349 15s. 3d. 4350 15s. 3d. 4351 15s. 3d. 4352 15s. 3d. 4353 15s. 3d. 4354 15s. 3d. 4355 15s. 3d. 4356 15s. 3d. 4357 15s. 3d. 4358 15s. 3d. 4359 15s. 3d. 4360 15s. 3d. 4361 15s. 3d. 4362 15s. 3d. 4363 15s. 3d. 4364 15s. 3d. 4365 15s. 3d. 4366 15s. 3d. 4367 15s. 3d. 4368 15s. 3d. 4369 15s. 3d. 4370 15s. 3d. 4371 15s. 3d. 4372 15s. 3d. 4373 15s. 3d. 4374 15s. 3d. 4375 15s. 3d. 4376 15s. 3d. 4377 15s. 3d. 4378 15s. 3d. 4379 15s. 3d. 4380 15s. 3d. 4381 15s. 3d. 4382 15s. 3d. 4383 15s. 3d. 4384 15s. 3d. 4385 15s. 3d. 4386 15s. 3d. 4387 15s. 3d. 4388 15s. 3d. 4389 15s. 3d. 4390 15s. 3d. 4391 15s. 3d. 4392 15s. 3d. 4393 15s. 3d. 4394 15s. 3d. 4395 15s. 3d. 4396 15s. 3d. 4397 15s. 3d. 4398 15s.

A point of order having been moved by Mr. JONES, as to the propriety of the Council dealing with the matter at all in the absence of the parties whose interests were involved.

The President ruled that there was no private right of interest in question.

Mr. JONES denied the last proposition, but supported the original motion, quoting from authorities in opposition to those of the Solicitor-General.

The debate was adjourned, on the motion of Mr. JONES, until Wednesday next.

The Bathurst Bill, Dock, and Thistle Bill were withdrawn by Mr. JONES, who stated that since the introduction of the measure he had been informed of great difficulty, and also injury, would have attended the carrying out of its provisions.

The Trade Marks Bill passed through committee without amendment.

The report of the Committee on the Advances to Agents Bill was adopted.

The Australian Agricultural Company's Bill was passed on a second time.

The House adjourned until Wednesday next.

In the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

In reply to questions put to Ministers the following information was furnished:—That the damage done by floods to the public wharf at Kempsey, Macleay River, arose from the wharf not having been constructed according to the plan furnished, for which the Board of Magistrates was responsible, and that it had been referred to the Crown Law Officers for their opinion as to whether the contractors were responsible; that ten days had been accepted some time ago for the construction of the approaches to the wharf at Tallowah, but work could not be completed until the road had been proclaimed, and that the proclamation would be shortly published.

In reply to a question by Mr. MATE, as to whether any arrangements had been made by which dutiable goods might pass through the colony of South Australia via the River Murray into New South Wales, Mr. SMITH referred the hon. member to the minutes of the proceedings of the recent conference held before the Government.

Mr. MATE complained of the insufficiency of the reply and moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of obtaining further information on the subject. Mr. SMITH adhered in substance to the terms of his first reply, but he stated with reference to goods shipped below Goolwa riverwards before the 1st May, the proposed duties would not be charged.

At 4 o'clock the House resumed, and Mr. MATE, by the aid of the House, moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of obtaining further information on the subject. Mr. SMITH adhered in substance to the terms of his first reply, but he stated with reference to goods shipped below Goolwa riverwards before the 1st May, the proposed duties would not be charged.

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the chair was agreed to, and leave was given for the Committee to sit again at a later hour of the day.

Mr. COWAN then moved that the House adjourn until 7 o'clock, and after some discussion the motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at half past 12.

It is perfectly true that the squatters as a body have no uniform views on the Land Question except to obtain each section for itself the largest quantity of land for the least possible rent. Among them there are many high-minded gentlemen who wish for nothing unfair to the colony, and who are prepared to give all the State can justly demand; but there are others of course who are intent only on their own interest, and a few who would support any injustice towards their fellows if only it would secure better terms for themselves. Hence, while some see with dismay the operation of an Act which has rendered their runs worthless, others remote from the track of mischievous interference smile at the havoc aff and believe that they are safe themselves for generations to come. To obtain their own objects they will praise the Land Act as a whole, compliment Mr. JOHN ROBERTSON, fiddle over one, and cajole another, and fancy the world is none the wiser.

It is quite true that those who are desirous of adapting our Land Law to the real wants of the colony should understand one another. The praise and condemnation of free selection is proffered by persons who are yet—when they come to details—in practical agreement. If a fine piece of country be taken up by farmers, who denies that this is good? But it is necessary to assume that there was no way on earth to this land in virtue of an Act but a few years old? Was there no cultivation before? Is there less in South Australia, where the law still subsists that we too rashly repealed? If a small farmer obtain, at five shillings an acre, land worth five pounds an acre—adjacent to roads made by the common expense and labour of the State—brought out at a great cost—this is good for him, but it is nevertheless a sacrifice of the general public. If a number of free selectors, honestly bent on labour settle a neighbourhood, and obtain the ordinary appendages of civilisation—their being free selectors will have no effect one way or other on their social condition; but that does not destroy the fact that all they are they might have been without free selection had the administration of the land been intelligent, while the evils of free selection might have been avoided, which already are sufficiently apparent to warn us of their full peril. Who ever said that, or even a tenth part of the free selectors were loafers or cattle stealers? Is it necessary to show that few exist to produce the statistics of a London plague? Besides, it is well known that the free selectors include the most opulent and respectable—some men have their tenants, and their retainers—they have their free selectors. The names on the roll do not disclose the true proprietorship, and under the pretence of establishing an agricultural community there has been a wholesale alienation of the Crown lands to those who were thought to have enough already. Everybody knows all this. There may be means to set aside such arrangements, but this is only a new power of corruption in the hands of the Government of the day. Can any one be surprised that a law so framed and so worked has its ardent friends? How many more will it have if the Government shall sell the land for 5s. a acre, if the payment be indefinitely deferred, as lately proposed. The squatters and free selectors may then dance a hump together, and the only party to suffer will be the public, which has no voice. We do not judge of a law by the applause it commands from those who personally profit by it. The masses of the people have no power to appreciate the effects of a measure until they are realised, and then it is too late. Those who have land for nothing—who can turn the Act to account—who can evade its mischief—who can appropriate its benefits—praise the bridge which carries them safely over. Were the Government to turn its attention to the market at 50 per cent. discount, the local speculators would seem it a good measure, if they could raise 60 per cent. on them; and if the proceeds were taken down to the Civil Service Club, and distributed fairly among the gentlemen who there do congregate, there would be great joy in many a household now troubled by domestic straits, but the joy would extend no further. The public, whose credit and revenue would be compromised, although for the time silent, would have its day of reckoning, when the real character of the transaction would be proclaimed, but in vain.

The speech of Mr. WILSON, the late Minister for Lands, was characterised by the fairness which has often distinguished him when not confined by his own ideas. His upright conduct in office has been often observed. We should be very sorry to allow him to take a piece of gold reaper, for he has noticed that the mainpring runs outside the fused, and that the balance weighs an excrement; but then the case would be safe in his keeping. He has not feared the popular misconception which he has admitted that the pastoral interest is worth the care of Parliament, and that it cannot thrive if left in uncertainty. The state of the law was clearly put by him as a great political scandal as well as economical blunder. It is not to be expected that tenants without length of lease will spend money a long occupation only can repay. If the landlord is in any case interested in giving encouragement to such enterprise as may increase the profit of the tenant, and the ultimate value of the estate, how much more a Government, which will by every advance in the opulence of the country ensure an increase to the revenue, and by the increase of population diminish the comparative cost of administration. We are far from joining in the imprudent cry which would get rid of the difficulties of management by alienating the public property for a song. The revenue of the land is nearly the only advance possessed by a new country over an old one, and is indispensable to lighten the first expenses of colonisation. The law at present, we are told by Mr. ROBERTSON, gives a right to the Administration to renew the leases; but Mr. MARTIN's opinion and Mr. DARVELL's concur that it does not give the tenant a right to renewal. The Government can do justly if it pleases, but it can hold the heads of the tenants in terror over the other. If the alternative were that we should surrender the land altogether to the first comers, it may be doubted if this policy would be more mischievous than to convert a body of English gentlemen into poor dependent slaves. They could make no contract—they could give no security—but which must take into account the caprices of the Ministry and the fluctuations of popular feeling. More adventurous spirits would risk their fortunes and find a strange fascination in the gambling element, but to most persons the uncertainty may be a source of embarrassment, and leave a sense of political degradation. The free

selectors, as their numbers multiply, will be able to make their own terms with the Government; but the pastoral tenants of the Crown would have no other safety than in the doubtful honour of the Cabinet of the day, or a good understanding by unavowed means with the demagogues whom they could more easily buy in the Assembly than defeat at the poll. It was so they managed in Victoria. The refusal of open justice tends, to all sorts of underhand methods for its attainment.

The Ministry seems to be more satisfied with its arrangement of the Border Customs tariff, than some of the parties do who are affected by it. Remonstrances have already been made in the House by some Riverine squatters, who object to paying Victorian rates of duty, remonstrances are on the way from the South Australian Government, and complaints are also put forward by the Albany wine-growers. These last, however, do not appear to us to have any substantial grievance; on the contrary, they are rather a favoured class than otherwise.

The articles of agreement, it must be admitted, are not couched in the most perspicuous language, and it is not at all wonderful that unwary parties should fall at first to see the whole meaning. Whether the document was carefully constructed in Victoria and accepted in Sydney without demur, or whether it was a joint composition, has not been revealed; but whether the ambiguities are accidental or intentional, it is clear that they have puzzled a good many readers. According to our interpretation of the document, however, the Albany wine-growers, so far from having anything to complain of, will have all the advantages of free trade together with all the benefits of protection.

The Albany wine-growers reside in this colony; they find their best customers in Victoria. Before the border customs were levied, the wine crossed the frontier unchanged, and when we stationed officers to levy duties on dutiable commodities crossing the Murray, Victoria did the same. Under that regime, of course, the wine was taxed, for Victoria collected the same duty on the Murray that it did at Melbourne, and colonial wines entering Melbourne, whether from Adelaide or Sydney, paid a duty, and a duty, too, so heavy as to be rather discouraging to the trade. Now that the Customs officers have ceased to levy border duties the wine will pass freely again as before. Every cask or bottle that crosses the Murray will have to be reported, at least for the present year, because the revenue officers of both colonies are jointly to take note of all dutiable goods that cross the frontier either way. Some such goods pass into Victoria as well as from it. The net result on which our receipts will be calculated will be the balance after subtracting the duties due to Victoria from the duties due to us. It is principally wine on which Victoria will reckon, because stores sent forward into Riverina are seldom returned again south of the Murray. It is a peculiarity of the case that while our duties will be levied on imports, the Victorian frontier duty will be levied on local produce. Victoria sends us no dutiable article that it produces to balance the Albany wine. We shall receive no money from Victoria which it has not previously levied as duty at Melbourne, and we shall pay what we have not levied as duty. For we have no excuse duty on the growth of wine, and yet in the joint account we shall be debited with the duty payable on the Albany wine.

The wine-growers will not feel any tax, but the general revenue will virtually pay the duty for them. So that the more prosperous our own wine-growers at Albany are, and the more extensive their consignments to Victoria, the more they will reduce the amount of our border duties. For the tax payable on the wine they sell will be balanced against the taxes due to our revenue on the tea, sugar, tobacco, and grog sent across the Murray into Riverina.

But while the growers will not pay a tax, they will enjoy a protected market. If the South Australians send their wine up the Murray to sell it at Beechworth, the Victorians will levy a tax on it en route. If they send it round by Melbourne, it must still pay a tax. So our own Hunter River or Camden wines, if sent to Melbourne, must pay the tax. So that the Albany growers are protected in the Victorian market, not only against the South Australians, but against their own fellow-colonists who produce a similar article nearer to the metropolis.

This is, no doubt, an anomaly. If the wine trade were of more importance, the anomaly would be a serious blot upon the general conduct. But it is comparatively of minor importance, and must be accepted as an unavoidable incident. Before the Albany wine trade grows to any enormous dimensions we may have all become wise enough to agree to a common tariff and a Customs-union. And this would at once get rid of all anomalies. There would be a free intercourse then in all commodities which were of colonial production, and all border complications would vanish. We must come to this ultimately; if we have more statesmanship amongst us and less provincial jealousy, we should come to it at once without enduring any longer the inconveniences of this abuse.

But the common tariff cannot be a protective tariff. The Union must be based on free trade, and must be a guarantee for its continuance. The notion has gained currency in Victoria that the effect of the convention is, on the whole, favourable to a protective policy, and that it is a step in the direction of a common tariff on that basis. It seems to be assumed that because a thinly populated part of the interior is subjected to a protectionist tariff that the thin end of the wedge is inserted, and that the same or a similar tariff may be more easily spread over the rest of the colony. But this is certainly a delusion. The incidental effect of the convention may possibly be to strengthen the hands of the Protectionist Ministry in Victoria. The mercantile community will be gratified by the settlement of the border question, because the late state of things was injuring the trade between Melbourne and Riverina, and the merchants are the chief opponents of the projected tariff. Moreover, the Ministry will be able to tempt the Council with the prospect of revenue raised without taxation. Out of £75,000 levied on Riverine stores on the basis of the Victorian tariff, perhaps not more than £50,000 will be payable to New South Wales. The odd £25,000 will be all clear profit levied on "foreigners." It can be voted to clearing the Murray, and will compel New South Wales to vote an equal sum for the same purpose.

It is said that the extreme readiness shown by the Victorian Ministry to come to terms was dictated by the expectation that it would help to smooth the passage of their tariff through the Council. It was a bit of "foreign policy." It may have been so, but it will not affect the determination of New South Wales to adhere to free trade. We do not suppose that the

Ministry gave the Victorian delegates any nod or wink to encourage the expectation that their tariff would soon be that of this colony also; and if they did they certainly reckoned without their host.

Cotton.

Terma, cash.

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